

March 11, 2013

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer
Arizona Governor
Executive Tower
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Brewer:

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) appreciates your efforts to expand Arizona's Medicaid program. ADA believes all residents of Arizona should have access to high quality, affordable health care, and expanding Arizona's Medicaid program is an important step toward that goal. It is estimated that more than 390,000 residents of Arizona have diabetes including a large number of people of ethnic minorities.

Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to rely on the Medicaid program than non-Hispanic whites and they are also at greater risk of developing diabetes.¹ For these individuals, access to health care coverage is essential to successful disease management and reduction of risk for severe complications such as blindness, amputations, heart disease and kidney failure. Inconsistent and inadequate health insurance coverage often results in great disparities in access to care and health status. Expansion of coverage under Medicaid offers the promise of significantly reducing these disparities.

Prevention programs and early detection can delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes and help improve control of diabetes and its complications thereby reducing Medicaid spending. For Medicaid enrollees, access to preventive services is valuable and has been found to increase compliance with recommended preventive care. In fact, **Medicaid enrollees are 15 percent more likely to be tested for high blood sugar or diabetes than someone who is uninsured.**²

There are many opportunities to prevent costly, devastating diabetes complications, for example: eye exams can lead to a 60% decrease in blindness; foot exams can lead to an 85% decrease in amputations; and, glucose control can reduce kidney-related complications by 40%. **An individual's ability to manage their diabetes is directly tied to his or her ability to access affordable and adequate health insurance coverage.**

The American Diabetes Association appreciates your leadership in Medicaid expansion in Arizona. If you have any questions, please contact Rip Wilson at (602) 369-3775 or via email at ripp@srwcon.com.

Sincerely,

Laura Landon, Executive Director
American Diabetes Association

¹ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, et al., "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010." U.S. Census Bureau, September 2011, available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf>.

² Id.